

Sir

(1) - The 2 - £3-00

Dear Barnes,

I postponed my answer
to you till this morning hoping
to be able in the course of last
evening to get off a so very agree-
able engagement for Friday in
order that I might accept
yours for the same day - I find
it however impossible & therefore
very reluctantly say that I
shall not be able to dine with
you on Friday. Next time I hope
to be more lucky -

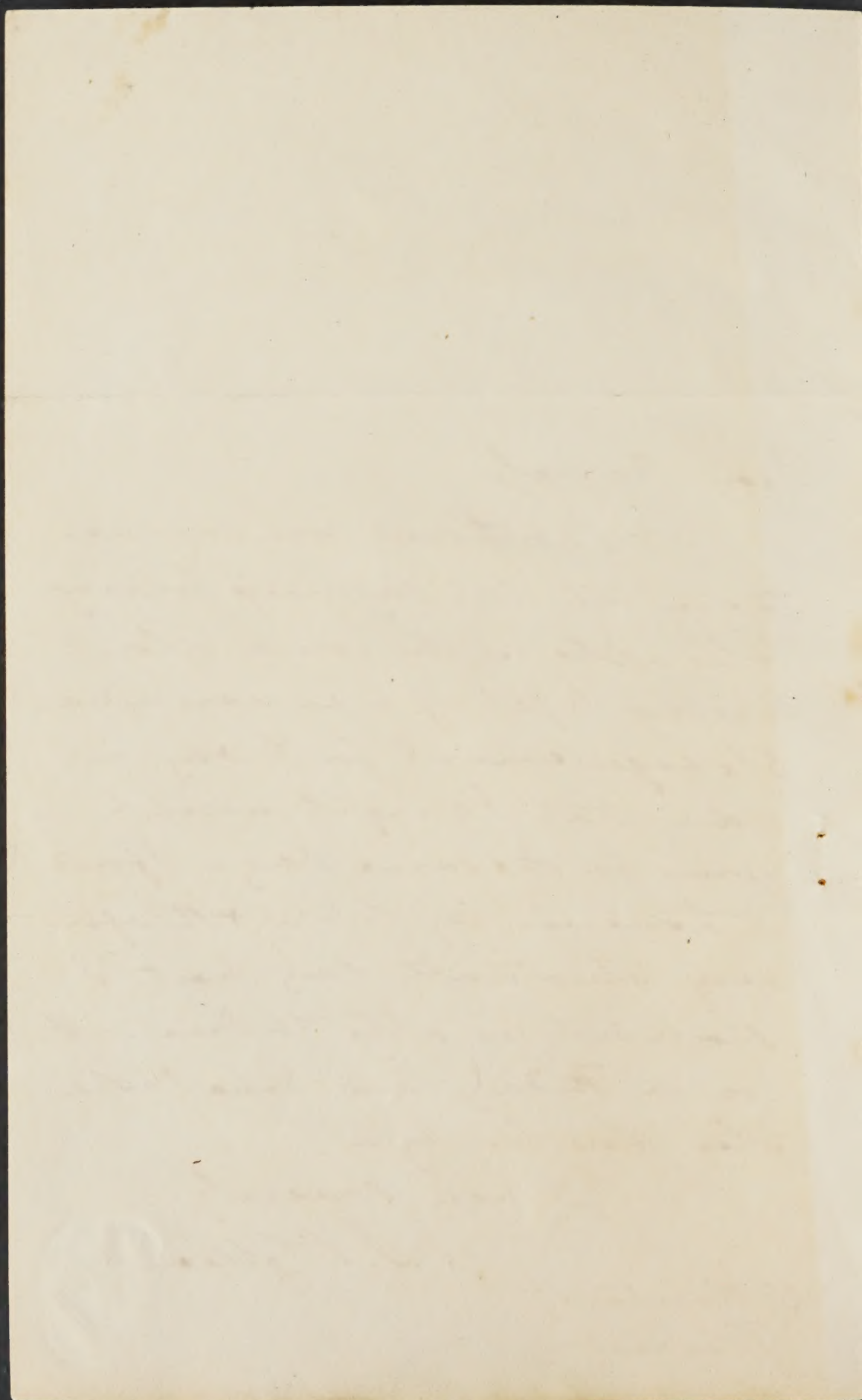
Yr very sincerely

J. P. Collier

23 Hunter St.

Wednesday

Editor of Shakespeare



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- 5. ?

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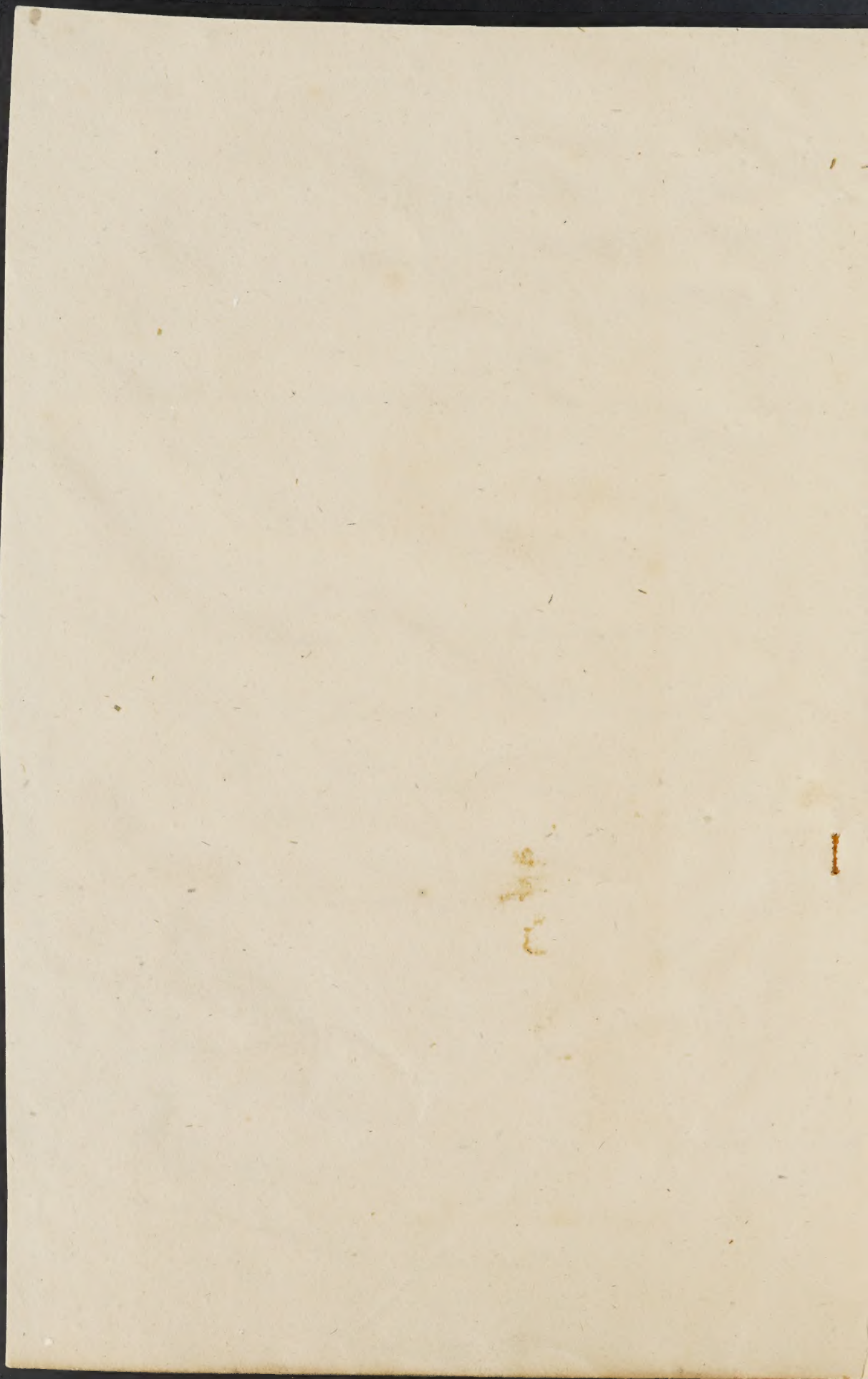
pink

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It is

since

d. P.



Dear Foster

Can you dine with
us on Sunday at 5? It is
so long since we saw you
(mea culpa) that perhaps
you may have forgotten
where we live. It is 25 Es-
sex Square.

Yrs sincerely

J. P. Collier

Jan. 15th 1835.

J. P. Collier

21/-



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1730
1730

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JA 20.
1836

John Foster Esq.
57 Lincoln Inn
Fields

My dear Sir

If instead of sending your note of yesterday to the M.C. Office you had ordered it to be dropped at 24 Brompton Square it would have been in time. I am very sorry it was not in time.

The fact is that I did not come to the Office last evening (as I am only there

Librarian

occasionally at night) & therefore
missed your note. I hope that
Mr. H. Bayley will not miss
your penagraph.

I did not understand your
telegraphic dispatch the other
evening in the remote corner of
the Bus. I shall always (as you
know) be happy to aid any such
project. You need not get Mr
Easthope's sanction to induce me
to do all that lies in my power.

Yrs. Very truly

J. H. Collier

Mr. Collier
Friday Mon.

Shakespeare
at

Victoria Road

Kensington

31 Dec. 1848

My dear Sir

My daughter &

I shall have great pleasure
in accepting your invitation
for Thursday next at six. I
am, my dear Sir

Yours very sincerely

J. Payne Collier

Wynne Jones Esq.

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Geys House
W. Maidenhead
6 July 1853

Sir

I am much obliged
by your note.

I presume that it will
not give you much trouble
to find the quotation from
Coke on Terms & Gallon glasses;
and if so, I will thank you
to send it to me. I do not
recollect to have seen it, or
to have seen it extracted.

Here I have compared
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few books about me, and
those not in the depart-
ment of law: my law-books
are at the Pentecostion.

Any body who gives
me a hint, to supply an omis-
sion, does me a favour, &
I remain,

Sir

Yours obliged & faithful
J. Payne Collier

F. A. Huntington Esq.

Riverside

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Riverside
Maidenhead
12 Dec. 1855

My dear Sir

I was unfortunate
yesterday: I missed the only
train that could bring me
to Devonshire House by the
hour I had named. I hope,
and believe, that you were
not disappointed in your
main object - that of seeing
the book again at your
leisure. The clock by which
I usually am regulated was

wrong, and that threw me
out.

I am very sorry for it
on all accounts. I might
still further have profited
by your remarks, and by
the sharpness of your eyes.
Again I say that I hope
you will make any use
of such points as appear
to you to deserve notice,
whether discovered by
yourself or pointed out by
me. The more public such
matters are made the better.

Have you seen the
voluminous notes I sent to
W. Foster? He had them, &
I dare say, by this time he

Riverside

Walden

May

forwarded them to you.
In two columns, upon many
sheets, they give the old text
and the new, without one
word of comment or expla-
nation, so that ~~the~~ ^{each} emenda-
tion speaks only for itself.

If you wish at any
time to see me and the book
together, I will come to town
at a day's notice. I am,

My dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully

J. Paine Collier

E. Monvale Esq?

for Mr. F.

Be so good as to take care
of my M.S.

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Riverside

Maidenhead

May

Maidenhead
6 Sept. 1866

Sir

In a few days you will receive my Reprint of England's "Helicon" Part 2. It is paid for.

I now write to learn whether, if I reprint (as I intend) "Dunbar's Poetical Rhapsody" ¹⁶⁰² as the latest of our early Miscellanies, in verse, you will like to have a copy of it. It may cost you 30/ but probably not more, filling 300 of my pages.

If you like it, you may send me, as soon as convenient, a P. O. Order for 20/ in anticipation & I will put down your name.

Yours very faithfully

H. T. Hall Esq.

J. Payne Collier

P. M.

12 Oct.

My dear Sir,

All that I did in
regard to Shakespeare's
Life, was to revise a
proof sheet, set up for
Rodd, by the original
in the Prerog. Office. I
have the proof sheet by
me & shall be happy
to shew it to you, if you
call tomorrow before

one

8'clock, as after that
hour I happen to have
an engagement that
may detain me for
a couple of hours.

Believe me
Yours very truly
J. Madder.

J. P. Collier by

[illegible]

20. Hall
No. 6. St. Mary's Place,
West Brompton,
S. W.
19 Dec. 1856.

Dear Sir

Understanding that Mr.
Millard had discovered a
deed relating to a Shakespeare
who kept a Tavern near the
old Globe Theatre. I find
on application to him he
has referred me to you
being ~~only~~ anxious for
the publication of any new

fact at all bearing upon
Shakespeare, & its due proof
of authenticity amidst the
unhappy forgeries now unfortunately
perplexing half the Shaksperian
readers, you must not think
I wish to forestall you
in any way whatever. My
enthusiasm however on
the subject is too great not
to seek most anxiously
for every whisper, & I trust
I may soon hear you kindly

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HALLIWELL (J.O.), A.L.S. 3 pp. 4to. London. December 1856
to 'Sir', regarding a Shakespeare Deed discovered by
Mr. Millard. "he has referred me to you & being only
anxious for the publication of any new fact ... bearing
upon Shakespeare, & its due proof of authenticity amidst
the unhappy forgeries now unfortunately perplexing half
the Shakesperian readers" his enthusiasm etc., £6.00.

SURCHARGED OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

The 'APSLEY' Air Letter

A John Dickinson Product

Form approved by the Post Office (United Kingdom) No. 1.

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intend to make the information
public. If any question arises in
the matter in which my knowledge,
long almost exclusively devoted to
Shaksperian literature, may be of
service, I should only feel highly
flattered at being referred to. If
I am correctly informed, the name
in the deed is Peter Shaksper. If so,
it is certainly no one in any way
connected with the poet's family

Yrs truly

J. O. Halliwell

J. C. Halliwell
19 Dec 56

The Crimes and Repentance of John Payne Collier

By S. SCHOENBAUM

COLLIER HAS NEVER sat for a proper biography. This is a pity, for his character fascinates. In several capacities—historian of the stage, editor of Elizabethan rarities, authority on Shakespeare and one of the founders of the Shakespeare Society—Collier made a distinguished contribution to scholarship. He interests us more, however, as the most accomplished and successful of forgers. Until scandal struck, his friends and associates never doubted his probity; to his family he never ceased to be a dear old man. In public he kept up appearances to the end. But other facets of his character (as well as that of his principal antagonist Ingleby) are revealed by the ample unpublished Collier materials—letters, an *Autobiography*, diaries—that exist in various libraries and in private hands. These documents require us to revise the accepted belief, expressed by Sir Edmund Chambers in his *William Shakespeare* (II, 386), that "Collier died impenitent".

He wrought mischief on a large scale. His celebrated predecessor, Ireland, lasted not much longer than a year before Malone crushed him with his *Inquiry*, and *Vortigern* was hooted off the stage; but for a generation Collier poisoned the mainstream of Shakespearean biography. Scarcely a life written during this period does not absorb his corruption; although De Quincey had only two books to assist him when he came to write his article on Shakespeare for the seventh *Britannica*, he managed to include Collier's principal "discoveries". His effrontery commands awe. Having invented a ballad, "The Inchanter's Island", Collier passed it off as antique and quoted the opinion of a distinguished antiquary:

Mr. Douce called it "one of the most beautiful ballads he had ever read," and shook his venerable head (as was his wont) with admiring energy and antiquarian enthusiasm at different passages in it; but I am by no means prepared to give it so high a character.

At the time Collier wrote, Douce was already dead.

He overreached himself with the Perkins Folio. This copy of the Second Shakespeare Folio of 1632 bears thousands of annotations entered (Collier maintained) by an Old Corrector, presumably one Thomas Perkins, who had owned the book. These emendations serve the usual function of Collier's forgeries, substantiating his pet notions and *idées fixes*. But none of his previous contributions caused such a stir, and none was subjected to such careful scrutiny. At the British Museum, the Perkins Folio underwent microscopic and chemical tests that revealed the presence of partly erased pencil markings, in a modern hand, beneath the pseudo-antique ink. The findings were published by an Assistant Keeper, N. E. S. A. Hamilton, in *An Inquiry into the Genuineness of the Manuscript Corrections in Mr. J. Payne Collier's Annotated Shakespeare, Folio, 1632; and of Certain Shakesperian Documents Likewise Published by Mr. Collier (1859)*. The task of demolition was completed by C. M. Ingleby, who pursued Collier with the single-minded intensity of Inspector Javert.

A man of sombre disposition, Ingleby judged himself no less severely than he did others. He confesses in a manuscript now in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington:

I am morally weak in many respects. In some matters I have been systematically deceptive, & occasionally cowardly & treacherous. I am passionately fond of personal beauty; but on the whole, I dislike my kind, & my natural affections are weak.

His sense of loathing, however, was highly developed. Speaking (in another unpublished manuscript, in the possession of Dr. Louis Marder of Evanston, Illinois) of the forgeries inserted by Collier into the *Alleyne Memoirs* and Henslowe's *Diary*, Ingleby remarks: "We know that the great literary slug has crawled over both. What wonder if we shall

still be able to trace his slime." In print he kept his detestation under control: his *Complete View of the Shakspeare Controversy* (1861) owes its success almost as much to its unimpassioned tone as to the comprehensiveness of the indictment it presents.

The book destroyed Collier's reputation for all time. He did not even attempt a rebuttal. Although (as he admitted in correspondence) the controversy was the most disturbing occurrence of his life, outwardly he maintained his calm. Unlike Ireland, he published no *Confession*. Instead he reissued his history of the stage in a revised edition with all the forgeries intact—to do otherwise would, after all, have amounted to an admission of misconduct. In his *Trilogy, Conversations Between Three Friends* (1874), ignoring his enemies and their evidence, Collier insists upon the authenticity of the Perkins Folio, and shows how editors had adopted many of the reviled emendations. He was in truth incorrigible; at the age of eighty-six he turned, like the uncouth swain in *Lycidas*, to fresh fields. "I have just discovered a most interesting book", Collier wrote to J. Parker Norris, the American Shakespearean, on November 17, 1875, "—a folio—full of Milton's brief notes and references; 1500 of them." Engaging as is the forger's youthful enthusiasm, we need not mourn that Collier failed to produce the Milton Folio.

Did he ever, even in private, let down his guard? On the flyleaf of his copy of the Shakespeare Third Folio, now at the Shakespeare Centre in Stratford, he wrote in 1876: "I fancied it the first Edition and a great prize, and what pleasure I had in making up its deficiencies"; then he added darkly, "I was then grossly ignorant, and was only beginning what I wish I had never begun". In his *Autobiography* and his *Diary*, now at the Folger Library, he reveals more of himself.

Amounting to 156 quarto pages, and followed by another eleven of additions, the *Autobiography* is a rambling and, on the whole, unexciting memoir. Written when Collier was past ninety, and intended for presentation to his Glasgow friend Alexander Smith, it bears evidence of mental deterioration: he refers to his father as alive at one point, although

he had then been dead for eight or ten years. The prefatory note hardly promises candour: "My life, from first to last, has been a hard-working one, I do not on that account look back upon it with any displeasure—rather the contrary." But every now and then Collier rouses himself from placidity. His celebrated affability sometimes deserts him. Even his benefactor Lord Ellesmere comes in for harsh treatment: "a poor weak man", Collier sneers, "whom anybody turned round their finger".

His old acquaintance John Campbell, the Lord Chancellor and eminent legal biographer, is the object of an unexpected vituperative digression. They had known one another since their reporting days together on the *Morning Chronicle*. When Collier sued for libel over an early attack on the Perkins Folio, thus adding perjury to his other crimes, Campbell from the bench had declared the plaintiff a "most honourable" man. To Collier he addressed his *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements Considered*—a gesture which the recipient denounces as impudent in his *Autobiography*. Collier gloats over the jurist's poverty during the newspaper days, when Campbell had barely a shoe for his foot and was dependent upon the charity of a colleague for his basin of soup. Later, at the time he was writing his *Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal*, Campbell borrowed extracts by Collier from Lord Ellesmere's papers and returned them cut up into fragments, for he was unwilling to pay to have them transcribed. So Collier reports. Once or twice he dined with Campbell, "but his parties were really so dull and formal that, at last, I purposely kept away from them". Long years previous, when the forger was hard up, Campbell had refused him a police magistracy, a post for which Collier was perhaps not by character ideally suited. He did not forget, nor did he forgive.

He had his own guilt to live with. When Collier refers to the Perkins Folio, his self-control falters. He speaks of it as an "extraordinary discovery", he boasts about the excellence of the Old Corrector's readings. "This is all that it is necessary to say here", he goes on,

because the question of the discovery

me to assail me. I defy them and charge all my Relations & Friends never to say one word in my defence: if they do, they will incur my heaviest displeasure. I despise them all my enemies & spit at them. I cannot forgive all this, or I expect valent, will be focused in an earlier part of my Diary. The only book I ever wrote, that I care for, is my "Poet's Pilgrimage". Nothing can be more pathetic & simply pathetic than these copy notes of telling the story of Patient Griselda.

thoroughly selfish man; Think of his having known me so intimately for 30 years, of his dining at my table scores & scores of times, and at last passing me in the streets without recognition." Nevertheless, during Dyce's last illness, Collier twice attempted to arrange an interview of reconciliation, but the dying man refused to see him.

On the last page of Volume XV of the *Diary* Collier solemnly enjoins his family never to say a word in his defence after his death: "If my memory cannot support and defend itself, let it fall." Again and again, in succeeding instalments, he reverts to this theme with obsessive insistence. At such moments, as he envisages his enemies closing in upon him, his hand, enfeebled by rheumatism, gathers strength: the script becomes larger, the ink heavier; he underlines words, writes N.B. above or alongside, draws a line in the margin or around the entire passage, affixes his signature. "I know that Enemies are only lying in wait for me [sic] to assail me", reads an entry dated November 30, 1880 (see facsimile reproduced on the right). "I defy them and charge all my Relations & Friends never to say one word in my defence: if they do, they will incur my heaviest displeasure. I despise all my enemies & spit at them I cannot forgive all."

Along with defiance, remorse and penitence. A notice of the Gladstone Diaries in a recent number of the *TLS* (January 9) has reminded us that for Victorians a diary often served the function of a hairshirt. Collier's is no exception. On November 21, 1877, he admits, "It is my own fault and folly that I am not now justly considered the first and best emendator of Shakespeare." This passage, too, he signs. On February 19, 1881, he is again contrite: "I have done many base things in my time—some that I knew to be base at the moment, and many that I deeply regretted afterwards and up to this very day." This is sufficiently vague, but it is suggestive that in his next paragraph he turns to the Perkins Folio. The most forcible expression of his repentance comes near the very end, in the twelfth and last volume of his *Diary*. In a barely legible scrawl Collier writes, on Sunday, May 14, 1882 (see left-hand facsimile).

I am bitterly sad and most sincerely grieved that in every way I am such a despicable offender I am ashamed of almost every act of my life.

J. Payne Collier
Nearly blind

My repentance is bitter and sincere

The next year he died at the age of ninety-four.

Among the incidental pleasures afforded by the *Diary* is Collier's recollection of playing billiards some sixty years previously with a young medical student in Chancery Lane and in Fleet Street. This student was "very cheerful, though thoughtful [sic] . . . rather short of stature but with regular pleasing features and a good forehead". Now and then they met in a bookshop. On one occasion the young man, who was poetical but did not talk much on that subject, took up a copy of Milton, and unexpectedly began a discourse in which he maintained that "no great poet ever wrote a great passage with a complete knowledge at the time of writing that it was great: he poured it out by inspiration and was not fully aware of its beauty or grandeur until he read & reflected upon it some time afterwards". The speaker was John Keats. Collier beat him at billiards.

*The only reference in print to the *Diary* which I have been able to find is in J. Q. Adams's foreword to S. A. Tannenbaum's *Shakesperian Fragments* (1933), which gives a paragraph to a volume of the *Diary* for 1879.

Grateful acknowledgment is due to the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Huntington Library, the Shakespeare Centre and Dr. Louis Marder for permission to quote from manuscript sources.

Facsimile pages from Collier's diary, reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Handwritten notes in the top right corner, possibly indicating a date or location.

Faint, illegible text or markings in the lower left quadrant, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.